

(b) The agency shall process complaints alleging violations of section 504 with respect to employment according to the procedures established by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 29 CFR part 1613 pursuant to section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791).

(c) The Equal Opportunity Officer shall be responsible for coordinating implementation of this section. Complaints may be sent to Director, Office of Human Relations, Surface Transportation Board, Room 3147, Washington, DC 20423.

(d) The agency shall accept and investigate all complete complaints for which it has jurisdiction. All complete complaints must be filed within 180 days of the alleged act of discrimination. The agency may extend this time period for good cause.

(e) If the agency receives a complaint over which it does not have jurisdiction, it shall promptly notify the complainant and shall make reasonable efforts to refer the complaint to the appropriate government entity.

(f) The agency shall notify the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board upon receipt of any complaint alleging that a building or facility that is subject to the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4151–4157), or section 502 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 792), is not readily accessible to and usable by handicapped persons.

(g) Within 180 days of the receipt of a complete complaint for which it has jurisdiction, the agency shall notify the complainant of the results of the investigation in a letter containing—

(1) Findings of fact and conclusions of law;

(2) A description of a remedy for each violation found; and

(3) A notice of the right to appeal.

(h) Appeals of the findings of fact and conclusions of law or remedies must be filed by the complainant within 90 days of receipt from the agency of the letter required by § 1014.170(g). The agency may extend this time for good cause.

(i) Timely appeals shall be accepted and processed by the head of the agency.

(j) The head of the agency shall notify the complainant of the results of the appeal within 60 days of the receipt of the request. If the head of the agency determines that additional information is needed from the complainant, he or she shall have 60 days from the date of receipt of the additional information to make his or her determination on the appeal.

(k) The time limits cited in paragraphs (g) and (j) of this section may be extended with the permission of the Assistant Attorney General.

(l) The agency may delegate its authority for conducting complaint investigations to other Federal agencies, except that the authority for making the final determination may not be delegated to another agency.

[51 FR 22896, June 23, 1986, as amended at 51 FR 22896, June 23, 1986]

§§ 1014.171—1014.999 [Reserved]

PART 1016—SPECIAL PROCEDURES GOVERNING THE RECOVERY OF EXPENSES BY PARTIES TO BOARD ADJUDICATORY PROCEEDINGS

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Surface Transportation Board, DOT

§ 1016.105

1016.311 Payment of award.

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 504(c)(1), 49 U.S.C. 721.

SOURCE: 46 FR 61660, Dec. 18, 1981, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General Provisions

§ 1016.101 Purpose of these rules.

The Equal Access to Justice Act (5 U.S.C. 504) (called the “Act” in this part), provides for the award of attorney fees and other expenses to eligible individuals and entities who are parties to certain administrative proceedings (called “adversary adjudications”) before the Surface Transportation Board. An eligible party may receive an award when it prevails over the Board or another agency of the United States participating in the Board proceeding, unless the Board’s position in the proceeding, or that of the other agency, was substantially justified or special circumstances make an award unjust. The rules in this part describe the parties eligible for awards and the proceedings that are covered. They also explain how to apply for awards, and the procedures and standards that the Board will use to make them.

§ 1016.102 When the Act applies.

The Act applies to any adversary adjudication pending before the Board after October 1, 1981. This includes proceedings begun before October 1, 1981, if final Board action has not been taken before that date, regardless of when they were initiated or when final Board action occurs. These rules incorporate the changes made in Pub. L. No. 99-80, 99 Stat. 183, which applies generally to cases instituted after October 1, 1984. If awards are sought for cases pending on October 1, 1981 or filed between that date and September 30, 1984, the prior statutory provisions (to the extent they differ from the existing ones, and our implementing rules) apply.

[54 FR 26379, June 23, 1989]

§ 1016.103 Proceedings covered.

(a) The Act applies to adversary adjudications conducted by the Board under 5 U.S.C. 554 in which the position of this or any other agency of the United States, or any component of an agency, is presented by an attorney or

other representative (hereinafter “agency counsel”) who enters an appearance and participates in the proceeding. Proceedings for the purpose of establishing or fixing a rate are not covered by the Act. Proceedings to grant or renew licenses are also excluded, but proceedings to modify, suspend, or revoke licenses are covered if they are otherwise “adversary adjudications.” Generally, the types of Board proceedings covered by the Act include, but are not limited to, investigation proceedings instituted under 49 U.S.C. 11701 and 49 U.S.C. 10925 and disciplinary proceedings conducted pursuant to 49 CFR 1100.11.

(b) The Board may also designate a proceeding not listed in paragraph (a) of this section as an adversary adjudication for purposes of the Act by so stating in an order initiating the proceeding, designating the matter for hearing or at any other time during the proceeding. The Board’s failure to designate a proceeding as an adversary adjudication shall not preclude the filing of an application by a party who believes the proceeding is covered by the Act; whether the proceeding is covered will then be an issue for resolution in proceedings on the application.

(c) If a proceeding includes both matters covered by the Act and matters specifically excluded from coverage, any award made will include only fees and expenses related to covered issues.

§ 1016.104 Decisionmaking authority.

Unless otherwise ordered by the Board in a particular proceeding, each application for an award under this part shall be assigned for decision to the official or decisionmaking body that entered the decision in the adversary adjudication. That official or decisionmaking body is referred to in this part as the “adjudicative officer.”

[46 FR 61660, Dec. 18, 1981, as amended at 54 FR 26379, June 23, 1989]

§ 1016.105 Eligibility of applicants.

(a) To be eligible for an award of attorney fees and other expenses under the Act, the applicant must be a party to the adversary adjudication for which it seeks an award, it must have stood in an adversary relationship to the position taken by agency counsel, and it

must have prevailed on one or more of the issues raised by agency counsel. The term “party” is defined in 5 U.S.C. 504(b)(1)(B). The applicant must show that it meets all conditions of eligibility set out in this subpart and in Subpart B.

(b) The types of eligible applicants are as follows:

(1) An individual whose net worth did not exceed \$2 million at the time the adversary adjudication was initiated;

(2) Any owner of an unincorporated business, or any partnership, corporation, association, unit of local government, or organization whose net worth does not exceed \$7 million and which had no more than 500 employees at the time the adversary adjudication was initiated;

(3) Any organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)) exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code, or a cooperative association as defined in section 15(a) of the Agricultural Marketing Act (12 U.S.C. 1141j(a)), may be a party regardless of the net worth of such organization or cooperative association.

(c) For the purpose of eligibility, the net worth and number of employees of an applicant shall be determined as of the date the proceeding was initiated.

(d) The employees of an applicant include all persons who regularly perform services for remuneration for the applicant, under the applicant’s direction and control. Part-time employees shall be included on a proportional basis. Independent contractors under lease to motor carriers are not employees of the carriers under these rules. Also, agents for motor common carriers of household goods are not employees of their respective principal carriers.

(e) The net worth and number of employees of the applicant and all of its affiliates shall be aggregated to determine eligibility. Any individual, corporation or other entity that directly or indirectly controls or owns a majority of the voting shares or other interest of the applicant or any corporation or other entity of which the applicant directly or indirectly owns or controls a majority of the voting shares or other interest, will be considered an af-

filiate for purposes of this part, unless the adjudicative officer determines that such treatment would be unjust and contrary to the purposes of the Act in light of the actual relationship between the affiliated entities. In addition, the adjudicative officer may determine that financial relationships of the applicant other than those described in this paragraph constitute special circumstances that would make an award unjust.

(f) An applicant that participates in a proceeding primarily on behalf of one or more other persons or entities that would be ineligible is not itself eligible for an award.

[46 FR 61660, Dec. 18, 1981, as amended at 54 FR 26379, June 23, 1989]

§ 1016.106 Standards for awards.

(a) A prevailing applicant may receive an award for fees and expenses incurred in connection with a proceeding, or in a significant and discrete substantive portion of the proceeding, unless the position of the agency over which the applicant has prevailed was substantially justified. Whether or not the position of the agency was substantially justified shall be determined on the basis of the administrative record made in the adversary adjudication for which fees and other expenses are sought. The burden of proof that an award should not be made to an eligible prevailing applicant is on the agency counsel, which may avoid an award by showing that its position was reasonable in law and fact.

(b) An award will be reduced or denied if the applicant has unduly or unreasonably protracted the proceeding or if special circumstances make the award sought unjust.

[46 FR 61660, Dec. 18, 1981, as amended at 54 FR 26379, June 23, 1989]

§ 1016.107 Allowable fees and expenses.

(a) Awards will be based on rates customarily charged by persons engaged in the business of acting as attorneys, agents and expert witnesses, even if the services were made available without charge or at a reduced rate to the applicant.

(b) No award for the fee of an attorney or agent under these rules may exceed \$75.00 per hour, unless a higher fee is justified. 5 U.S.C. 504(b)(1)(A). However, an award may also include the reasonable expenses of the attorney, agent, or witness as a separate item, if the attorney, agent, or witness ordinarily charges clients separately for such expenses.

(c) In determining the reasonableness of the fee sought for an attorney, agent or expert witness, the adjudicative officer shall consider the following:

(1) If the attorney, agent or witness is in private practice, his or her customary fee for similar services, or, if an employee of the applicant, the fully allocated cost of the services;

(2) The prevailing rate for similar services in the community in which the attorney, agent, or witness ordinarily performs services;

(3) The time actually spent in the representation of the applicant;

(4) The time reasonably spent in light of the difficulty or complexity of the issues in the proceeding; and

(5) Such other factors as may bear on the value of the services provided.

(d) The reasonable cost of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, project or similar matter prepared on behalf of a party may be awarded, to the extent that the charge for the service does not exceed the prevailing rate for similar services, and the study or other matter was necessary for preparation of the applicant's case.

[46 FR 61660, Dec. 18, 1981, as amended at 54 FR 26379, June 23, 1989]

§ 1016.109 Awards against other agencies.

If an applicant is entitled to an award because it prevails over another agency of the United States that participates in a proceeding before this agency and takes a position that is not substantially justified, the award or an appropriate portion of the award shall be made against that agency.

Subpart B—Information Required From Applicants

§ 1016.201 Contents of application.

(a) An application for an award of fees and expenses under the Act shall identify the applicant and the proceeding for which an award is sought. The application shall show that the applicant has prevailed and identify the position of the Board or other agencies in the proceeding that the applicant alleges was not substantially justified. Unless the applicant is an individual, the application shall also state the number of employees of the applicant and describe briefly the type and purpose of its organization or business.

(b) The application shall also include a statement that the applicant's net worth does not exceed \$2 million (if an individual) or \$7 million (for all other applicants, including their affiliates). However, an applicant may omit this statement if:

(1) It attaches a copy of a ruling by the Internal Revenue Service that it qualifies as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)) exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code; or

(2) It states that it is a cooperative association as defined in section 15(a) of the Agricultural Marketing Act (12 U.S.C. 1141j(a)).

(c) The application shall state the amount of fees and expenses for which an award is sought.

(d) The application may also include any other matters that the applicant wishes the Board to consider in determining whether and in what amount an award should be made.

(e) The application shall be signed by the applicant or an authorized officer or attorney of the applicant. It shall also contain or be accompanied by a written verification under oath or under penalty of perjury that the information provided in the application is true and correct.

[46 FR 61660, Dec. 18, 1981, as amended at 54 FR 26380, June 23, 1989]

§ 1016.202 Net worth exhibit.

(a) Each applicant must provide with its application a detailed exhibit showing the net worth of the applicant and any affiliates (as defined in § 1016.105(f) of this part) when the proceeding was initiated. The exhibit may be in any form convenient to the applicant that provides full disclosure of the applicant's and its affiliates' assets and liabilities and is sufficient to determine whether the applicant qualifies under the standards in this part. The adjudicative officer may require an applicant to file additional information to determine its eligibility for an award.

(b) Ordinarily, the net worth exhibit will be included in the public record of the proceeding. However, an applicant that objects to public disclosure of information in any portion of the exhibit and believes that there are legal grounds for withholding it from disclosure may file a motion to withhold the information from public disclosure. The burden is on the moving party to justify the confidentiality of the information.

[46 FR 61660, Dec. 18, 1981, as amended at 54 FR 26380, June 23, 1989]

§ 1016.203 Documentation of fees and expenses.

The application shall be accompanied by full documentation of the fees and expenses, including the cost of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, project or similar matter, for which an award is sought. A separate itemized statement shall be submitted for each professional firm or individual whose services are covered by the application, showing the hours spent in connection with the proceeding by each individual, a description of the specific services performed, the rate at which each fee has been computed, any expenses for which reimbursement is sought, the total amount claimed, and the total amount paid or payable by the applicant or by another person or entity for the services provided. The adjudicative officer may require the applicant to provide vouchers, receipts, or other substantiation for any expenses claimed.

Subpart C—Procedures for Considering Applications

§ 1016.301 When an application may be filed.

(a) An application may be filed whenever the applicant has prevailed in the proceeding or in a significant and discrete substantive portion of the proceeding, but in no case later than 30 days after an administratively final disposition of the proceeding.

(b) If review or reconsideration is sought or taken of a decision as to which an applicant believes it has prevailed, proceedings for the award of fees shall be stayed pending final disposition of the underlying controversy.

(c) For purposes of this rule, see the Board's rules governing appellate procedures at §§ 1115.2 and 1115.3 to determine when a decision becomes administratively final.

[46 FR 61660, Dec. 18, 1981, as amended at 54 FR 26380, June 23, 1989]

§ 1016.302 Filing and service of documents.

Any application for an award or other pleading or document related to an application shall be filed and served on all parties to the proceeding in the same manner as other pleadings in the proceeding, except as provided in § 1016.202(b) for confidential financial information.

§ 1016.303 Answer to application.

(a) Within 30 days after service of an application, counsel representing the agency against which an award is sought may file an answer to the application. Unless agency counsel requests an extension of time for filing or files a statement of intent to negotiate under paragraph (b) of this section, failure to file an answer within the 30-day period may be treated as a consent to the award requested.

(b) If agency counsel and the applicant believe that the issues in the fee application can be settled, they may jointly file a statement of their intent to negotiate a settlement. The filing of this statement shall extend the time for filing an answer for an additional 30 days, and further extensions may be granted as justified.

(c) The answer shall explain in detail any objections to the award requested and identify the facts relied on in support of agency counsel's position. If the answer is based on any alleged facts not already in the record of the proceeding, agency counsel shall include with the answer either supporting affidavits or a request for further proceedings under § 1016.307.

[46 FR 61660, Dec. 18, 1981, as amended at 54 FR 26380, June 23, 1989]

§ 1016.304 Reply.

Within 15 days after service of an answer, the applicant may file a reply. If the reply is based on any alleged facts not already in the record of the proceeding, the applicant shall include with the reply either supporting affidavits or a request for further proceedings under § 1016.307.

§ 1016.305 Comments by other parties.

Any party to a proceeding other than the applicant and agency counsel may file comments on an application within 30 days after it is served or on an answer within 15 days after it is served. A commenting party may not broaden the issues.

[46 FR 61660, Dec. 18, 1981, as amended at 54 FR 26380, June 23, 1989]

§ 1016.306 Settlement.

The applicant and agency counsel may agree on a proposed settlement of the award before final action on the application, either in connection with a settlement of the underlying proceeding, or after the underlying proceeding has been concluded. If a prevailing party and agency counsel agree on a proposed settlement of an award before an application has been filed, the application shall be filed with the proposed settlement.

§ 1016.307 Further proceedings.

(a) Ordinarily, the determination of an award will be made on the basis of the written record. However, on request of either the applicant or agency counsel or on his or her own initiative, the adjudicative officer may order further proceedings when necessary.

(b) A request that the adjudicative officer order further proceedings under

this section shall specifically identify the information sought or the disputed issues and shall explain why the additional proceedings are necessary to resolve the issues.

[46 FR 61660, Dec. 18, 1981, as amended at 54 FR 26380, June 23, 1989]

§ 1016.308 Decision.

The adjudicative officer shall issue a decision on the application within 50 days after completion of proceedings on the application. The decision shall include written findings and conclusions on the applicant's eligibility and status as a prevailing party, and an explanation of the reasons for any difference between the amount requested and the amount awarded. The decision shall also include, if at issue, findings on whether the Board's or other agency's position was substantially justified, whether the applicant unduly protracted the proceedings, or whether special circumstances make an award unjust. If the applicant has sought an award against more than one agency, the decision shall allocate responsibility for payment of any award made among the agencies, and shall explain the reasons for the allocation made.

[46 FR 61660, Dec. 18, 1981, as amended at 54 FR 26380, June 23, 1989]

§ 1016.309 Agency review.

In the event the adjudicative officer is not the entire Board, the applicant or agency counsel may seek review of the initial decision on the fee application, or the Board may review the decision on its own initiative, in accordance with § 1115.2. If no appeal is taken, the initial decision becomes the action of the Board 20 days after it is issued. If the adjudicative officer is the entire Board, § 1115.3 applies.

[54 FR 26380, June 23, 1989]

§ 1016.310 Judicial review.

Judicial review of final Board decisions on awards may be sought as provided in 5 U.S.C. 504(c)(2).

§ 1016.311 Payment of award.

An applicant seeking payment of an award shall submit to the appropriate official of the paying agency a copy of the Board's final decision granting the

award, accompanied by a statement that the applicant will not seek review of the decision in the United States courts. Where the award is granted against the Surface Transportation Board the applicant shall make its submission to the Secretary, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423. The Board will pay the amount awarded to the applicant within 60 days of the applicant's submission unless the judicial review of the award or of the underlying decision of the adversary adjudication has been sought by the applicant or any other party to the proceeding.

**PART 1017—DEBT COLLECTION—
COLLECTION BY OFFSET FROM
INDEBTED GOVERNMENT AND
FORMER GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES**

Sec.

- 1017.1 Purpose and scope.
- 1017.2 Definitions.
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- 1017.9 Coordinating offset with another Federal agency.
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- 1017.12 Statute of limitations.
- 1017.13 Nonwaiver of rights.
- 1017.14 Interest, penalties, and administrative costs.

AUTHORITY: 31 U.S.C. 3716, 5 U.S.C. 5514; Pub. L. 97–365; 4 CFR parts 101–105; 5 CFR part 550.

SOURCE: 56 FR 32333, July 16, 1991, unless otherwise noted.

§ 1017.1 Purpose and scope.

(a) These regulations set forth guidelines for implementing the Debt Collection Act of 1982 at the Surface Transportation Board (STB). The purpose of the Act is to give agencies the ability to more aggressively pursue debts owed the Federal Government and to increase the efficiency of government-wide efforts to collect debts owed the United States. The authority for these

regulations is found in the Debt Collection Act of 1982 (Pub. L. 97–365 and 4 CFR 101.1 et seq.), Collection by Offset From Indebted Government Employees (5 CFR 550.1101 et seq.), Federal Claims Collection Standards (4 CFR 101.1 et seq.), and Administrative Offset (31 U.S.C. 3716).

(b) These regulations provide procedures for administrative offset of a Federal employee's salary without his/her consent to satisfy certain debts owed to the Federal Government. The regulations covered in this part apply to all current and former Federal employees who owe debts to the Board and to current Board employees who owe debts to other Federal agencies. The regulations set forth herein do not apply when the employee consents to recovery from his/her current pay account.

(c) These regulations do not apply to debts or claims arising under:

- (1) The Social Security Act;
- (2) The Internal Revenue Code of 1954;
- (3) The tariff laws of the United States; or

(4) Any case where a collection of a debt by salary offset is explicitly provided for or prohibited by another statute.

(d) These regulations also do not preclude the compromise, suspension, or termination of collection action, where appropriate, under the standards implementing the Federal Claims Collection Act (31 U.S.C. 3711 et seq., 4 CFR 101.1 et seq.). These regulations do not preclude an employee's requesting a waiver of a salary overpayment (i.e., alleged indebtedness) under 5 U.S.C. 5584, 10 U.S.C. 2774, or 32 U.S.C. 716, or in any way questioning the amount or validity of a debt by submitting a claim to the General Accounting Office (GAO), or requesting a waiver under statutory provisions pertaining to the particular debt.

(e) The Board's regulations governing debt collection for entities and individuals who are not current or former government employees are contained in 49 CFR part 1018.

[56 FR 32333, July 16, 1991, as amended at 58 FR 7749, Feb. 9, 1993]